

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

Bigots using Internet to spread hate message

One-third of justice was served Tuesday with the conviction of white supremacist John William King for his role in the dragging death of 49-year-old James Byrd Jr. in June.

King, 24, and alleged accomplices Shawn Allen Berry, 24 and Lawrence Russell Brewer, 31, picked up Byrd as he was walking home from a family gathering. The trio, it is alleged, then beat Byrd, chained him to the back of a pickup truck and drove three miles. Byrd's limbs were severed and he was decapitated when his head hit a roadside culvert.

Mirroring the rise in race-motivated crimes is an equally alarming rise in the number of groups spreading their racist venom via the Internet.

Hundreds of violent separatists groups are turning the information superhighway into a highway of hate. Rapper Ice Cube said in a song years ago: "The KKK is wearing 3-piece suits." They're also Internet users.

"We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children. Those who control the once-White nations deny us White nations, White schools, White organizations and everything necessary for racial survival," says a site sponsored by white supremacy group 14 Word Pressure.

Aryan Female Homestead asks: "Are you white and proud? Are you sick of the multi-culturalism that is being forced upon our children on the 'jew-tube' in Amerika today? How about the race mixing that has become so popular in the monkey infested cities? Do you know there is a higher percentage of white women murdering their children through the process of abortion than there are non-whites aborting their children? Well, if all of this makes you sick to your stomach like it does so many other white women, then its time to start opening your mouth about the evil 'zog system' that is turning Aryan women into brainwashed liberals."

And this beauty from the Houston chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of White People: "It's time to let the world know the White man is not going to continue to allow our own government to push Whites to the back of the bus any longer."

Racial hatred isn't simply the domain of whites. A search of black racists — or so-called racists — lists the Nation of Islam and other groups. Hate also stretches to ethnicity — many white supremacy groups are anti-Jew and anti-Arab — and encompasses sexual orientation.

But the people likely to be most affected by cyberhate are African-Americans. Though research shows black families are approaching white families in Internet use, African-Americans are still largely unaware of the pervasiveness of Internet hate. Racists no longer have to meet in basements and old barns, chat rooms and bulletin boards provide enough anonymity.

Knowledge is power and it's time we logged onto the information superhighway, for our own good.



Minority consumers devalued by advertisers

By William E. Kennard
Chairman, FCC

Special to Sentinel-Voice
Blacks don't buy Volvos.
Hispanics don't bathe.
African-Americans are "suspects" not "prospects."

All of these are stereotypes, generalizations that we all thought and hoped had gone the way of the black-and-white television and the rotary phone. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

All of these sentiments were expressed by various advertisers and advertising executives. They were excuses given for not advertising on minority-formatted radio stations, even on outlets that are some of the highest-rated stations on the dial.

In a first-of-its-kind study of the advertising industry, the FCC has found that the story of the radio business is a tale of two systems. Some companies refuse to advertise on urban-formatted or Spanish-language stations or are told by their advertising firms to do so. And others will only do so, but only after demanding deep discounts — often as large as 59 percent.

Because of these practices, minority-formatted radio stations find it harder and harder to generate the revenues they need to remain profitable. In fact, our study found that these practices reduce revenues to these stations by as much as two-thirds. The bottom line is clear. They are being deprived of advertising, the lifeblood of their business.

This is a system whose

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tale must be told, and whose story must end.

These practices are not only unfair. They do not make any business sense. Madison Avenue needs to understand today's Main Street. There is not only a diversity of peoples in America, but a diversity of types of people within each group — rich and poor, educated and unskilled, blue and white collar.

Unfortunately, the examples offered in this study suggest that some advertisers do not recognize the reality of minority consumers and the power of minority-formatted stations in reaching them. They fail to realize that there are untapped markets right here at home in the neighborhoods of our long-neglected minority communities.

In the end, we all suffer from these practices. If minority-formatted stations can not make themselves profitable, then they have less money to invest in the quality programming — news, public affairs, entertainment — that communities expect from their radio stations, as well as less money to invest in the equipment that brings it to them.

Moreover, bypassed by some of our biggest companies, African-American and Hispanic

families find themselves on the outside looking in to our national marketplace. If radio stations can't tell its listeners about new products or great sales, how can they serve their listeners? And how can these listeners be equals in the most equitable arena there is — the marketplace?

And these policies hurt us, as a nation, too. Economically, we can not continue to prosper if the purchasing power of all Americans is not unleashed. Politically, our democracy is weaker if our airwaves and our national debate lacks strong voices from all corners of our country.

If "sunshine is the best disinfectant," then the FCC study is a first step to ending these practices. There are many companies and advertisers who do treat

minority stations fairly, and they can be our partners in educating those who do not. That is why I, along with the American Advertising Federation, the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts, Representatives Menendez and Cheeks Kilpatrick, will host a February 22 ad summit. The meeting will bring together minority broadcasters, advertising firms, and companies to begin to assess the full extent of the problem. Once we gather the data, I believe that we will have a powerful tool to convince errant companies that ignoring minority consumers is not only wrong, but it is also foolish.

In the end, all of us will win. Minority broadcasters will get the attention and revenue that they deserve. Companies will be steered to untapped markets. Those that listen to these stations will be respected and better served by the marketplace. And we, as a nation, will have one system — open and fair to all.

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